

NOTES

It is just five years this month that Sir Charles Eliot returned to England with his MS on Japanese Buddhism, with the intention of publishing it. The last time I saw him at Otani University was, I think some time in December of the preceding year. The meeting we arranged had to take place while he was suffering from a severe cold. He did not have many things to talk about at this interview. He was not feeling at all well. When I expressed my regret that he had to force himself to come up to Kyoto and my hope that he would come to the East once more, he said, "I am now approaching seventy and may not come back." The tone of his voice foreboded something ill, and I felt quite sorry to miss him from the room where he used to come frequently to consult the books kept there and to have a talk with me on the subject he was then preparing to write. When I heard of the unfortunate event that overtook him on his way back to his own country, the news depressed me very much indeed, not only for personal reasons but for the cause of Buddhism. It was to be greatly regretted that Sir Charles was not able to go over the publication of his book himself.

Japanese Buddhism is divided into three parts: the first deals with Indian and Chinese Buddhism, the second with the history of Buddhism in Japan, and the third with the different sects and their doctrines, of which the last chapter on Nichiren is supplied by Sir George B. Sansom. To make a detailed survey of the book here is not my object. If the author were still on this side of the earth, there are some points I should like to communicate to him.

The study of Japanese Buddhism offers many interesting subjects not only from the point of view of the development of Buddhist thought itself but from the point of view generally of the religious consciousness. The Nichiren, Shin, and Zen are peculiar to Japanese Buddhism. While Zen came originally from China, it has entered so perfectly into the Japanese soul that, as Sir Charles states, "it is also the expression of that (Japanese) character." The Shin teaching developed from the Jōdo whose first intimations were given

by the Chinese Buddhists of the fifth and the sixth century, but in China even to the present date, no Buddhist teaching corresponding to the Shin has made its appearance. While Shin offers so much analogy to Christianity in many respects, it differs from the latter at one most conspicuous point which concerns its idea of history. As to the Nichiren, its peculiar association with nationalism and its aggressive militant spirit so foreign to the general Buddhist attitude are its special features which are to be explained in connection with the psychology of the Japanese people. Lastly, the Shingon is a mine of ideas, imageries, symbols, mudras, mantras, etc. Every conceivable being is included in its two Mandalas. It is a marvellous fact in the history of religion to see so many able minds sheltered in the cloisters of the richly endowed monasteries, devoting themselves to the study of every detail of their mystic rites.

Some critics state that the Japanese people are neither religious nor philosophical. In whatever sense this criticism may be regarded, the critics have not evidently studied the Japanese mind to its depths as they are traceable principally in the history of Buddhism. I remember I once had a talk with a prominent American many years ago who said among other things that as Japan and things Japanese had already been exhaustively studied what more things were there to write about? This was quite a sweeping remark, and I should now imagine he himself did not really mean what he then stated. Even a humble *mikan* (mandarin orange) lying before me at this moment is an inexhaustible treasure of secrets, which will yield up its contents only to those who really understand—and how many of us really understand this innocent fruit? I say this not merely from the religious point of view but from that of science too. Sir Charles was quite different in this respect, whenever some not necessarily very important points were suggested to him in regard to Japanese Buddhism he was most appreciative of the information. He had a truly scholarly trend of mind.

We are to be greatly thankful for the immense task the publishers took in the editing of this book, *Japanese Buddhism*. Without them we might never have seen this book on which the author put all his learning, scholarly spirit, and sympathetic heart of his last years. When I heard of the

death of the author at the Straits of Malacca, I felt deeply concerned about his MS. How glad I was when I heard of its publication! And when I received finally a complimentary copy from one of his relatives, all the pleasant memories I had with him in Kyoto and Nara were revived, but at the same time a deep feeling of sorrow depressed me. The author was a great friend of the Japanese people and of Buddhism.

D. T. S.

Manshi Kiyozawa (1863-1903) was a unique figure in the Buddhist world of the Meiji era. He was a great student of philosophy and tried heroically to solve the problem of life on the intellectual plane as was the case with other young people of his day. For that was the day when the intellectualising spirit of the nineteenth century was still most strongly felt in Japan, and it was also the day when Buddhism was still struggling hard to recover from the terrible blow dealt to it by the statesmen of the Restoration. Finding finally the uselessness of logic and science in the discovery of the Reality, he abandoned himself into the arms of Amida. He became a staunch follower of Shinran and gathered many young souls about him. Some of the latter are now proving to be the stronghold of the sect. Last year they commemorated the thirty-fifth anniversary of his death by publishing his complete works and also issuing popular selections of his writings. Below is an extract from what may be termed with his death-bed confession written by himself a few days before, in which he boldly states his faith:

“When I am asked about my faith, I say it consists in believing in Nyorai; he is the original body in whom my faith rests and in whom I cannot help but believe. The Nyorai in whom my faith rests is the original body which is able to make me what I am, in spite of the fact that I am the one who, as far as his self-power is concerned, has no power to accomplish anything, no power to stand by himself, being utterly helpless by himself. I am the one who has no power to understand what good and evil, truth and falsehood, happiness and misfortune are; and this being so I am utterly ignorant as to which way to move, left or right, backward or forward, in the world where good and evil, truth and falsehood, happiness and misfortune exist; and Nyorai

is he who has the power to make me move in this world, to make me die perfectly unconscious of all these complications: Nyorai indeed is this primary body in which I have my faith. Without believing in this Nyorai I am unable to live this life. I am unable to die. I have no choice but to believe in this Nyorai. I have no other way in this world but to place my faith in this Nyorai.....

“How does the infinitely loving Nyorai allow me to enjoy this peace of mind? He does this in no other way than by taking all responsibilities off me and thus by saving me. No sins are hindrances before Nyorai. I have no necessity to judge by myself what is good and bad, what is just and unjust. In whatever affairs, I just follow my own moods, go on with what my heart dictates, and have no compunctions. Whether my conduct is faulty, whether it is sinful, I do not worry myself about it. Nyorai takes up all responsibilities for my deeds whatever they are. Only by believing in this Nyorai, I am enabled to abide in a state of eternal peace. The power of Nyorai is infinite. The power of Nyorai is peerless. The power of Nyorai pervades on every occasion. The power of Nyorai prevails in the ten quarters and acts with the utmost freedom breaking through every hindrance, every obstruction.”

Recently there is much talk about the revival of Buddhism in Japan, but in point of fact there are not so many individual phenomena substantiating the report. Religious subjects have been broadcasted on the radio, the publication of some popular Buddhist books have sold well, more Buddhist magazines have been issued, the government attitude towards religious teaching in the government schools and colleges has been relaxed, these are all encouraging signs of revival, to our mind, in the Buddhist world of present Japan. The old temples are repaired, the annual festivals are well attended by people from the country, and books on Buddhism are overcrowding the market. This result is most encouraging. But there is much room for improvement. The Buddhist colleges should be better equipped, the qualifications of the Buddhist missionaries both domestic and foreign elevated, new enterprises, social, scholarly, and international, supported and Buddhist priests and monks themselves

awaken to the new requirements of the new age, not only from the moral and spiritual point of view but also from that of social movements.

People talk much about the revival of the religious spirit in Japan, and by this they point to the rise of a number of new "religious" movements. Some of them are, indeed, gathering a large following and building up large halls or auditoriums, some critics ascribe these movements to a feeling of unrest which is visible throughout the various social strata. The feeling of unrest largely comes they say from the present economic system as well as from complicated international relations.

Whatever this may be, the curious feature of these "religious" movements in Japan is that something of the doctrine of Christian Science is perceivable in them. "Spirit is everything, matter nil," they declare. This pure "idealism" is however really a growth on Oriental soil, which was deftly appropriated by the American mind, and so reconstructed as to suit the psychology of people on the other side of the Pacific. If spirit is all in all, why bother about wealth and health? Christian Science is a "religion" of the will and not of the intellect, in fact as is all religion. But in its case a great deal of unpurgated wishes are mixed up in its teaching. I am not qualified at this moment to pass a judgment on the new "religious" movements, in Japan. But this I state that they are followers like Christian Scientists of money and health. We are ill because we are ill in spirit, we are poor because we fail to recognise the truth that we are plentifully supplied in spirit with all that we need. They of course contain much of religious truth, but as to how far we can make a direct application of such truth to our everyday life we have to study the matter from the various angles of economy, science, politics, morality, etc.

In ancient days Oriental idealism fared well, because of the peculiar environment from which it arose. When the Americans adopted it, they naturally had to modify it to suit not only their psychology but their special social and economic conditions. Perhaps very many people in America found Science congenial, and it is thriving. Are there situations in present Japan which require her people to take their

ancient creed back together with its American modifications! This world circulation and interpenetration of ideas is an interesting subject of study for students of religion.

The sixth All Japan Buddhist Assembly was held November 3-6 at the Hongwanji Temple in Tokyo. Three thousand priests representing thirteen sects and fifty-four branches of Japanese Buddhism gathered from all parts of the country to discuss various matters in connection with social service and education and formulated the following declaration, "We Buddhists expect to endeavour to renew the Dharma of Buddha in the present age, correct existing evils and enhance national prosperity."

A Memorial Service for the late Prof. Sylvain Lévi was held at Zōjōji, Tokyo, according to Buddhist rites, on November 26, under the joint auspices of the International Buddhist Society, the Imperial Academy, the Franco-Japanese Society, the Societies of Indian Philosophy, of Indian Literature, of Religion, each in the Imperial Universities of Tokyo and Kyoto, and other organisations. A large number of politicians and scholars, both Europeans and Japanese, attended the service. After the service, a memorial speech meeting was held and Professors Inoue, Takakusu, Anezaki, and others talked about the late scholar and his great achievements in his life-time.

The All Japan Truth Movement was formed in 1934 by Rev. E. Tomomatsu and others for the purpose of popularising Buddhism, to so modernise it as to appeal to the masses. Its motto is "Awaken in the Truth to that which is old, yet ever new." It publishes a monthly magazine and a newspaper and holds lectures. At a recent meeting in Tokyo, a meeting was held which was enthusiastically attended.

The radio has been much used during the past years for the presentation of Buddhism. Series of lectures were given on the Life of the Buddha, the lives of famous Buddhists, such as Kōbō Daishi, Nichiren, Shinran, on sutras such as *Kegon* (Avatamsaka), *Shōmangyō* (Shrīmālādevī), *Yuima* (Vimalakīrti), and others. Lectures on Zen were also

given by different scholars and masters of Zen Buddhism.

The drama has also played its part. Last year Sesshu Hayakawa, the famous actor, presented the movie drama on the life of Nichiren and this year, a stage drama on the life of Shakamuni. His bearing, his noble mien, distinguished and handsome appearance together with the subtle Oriental knowledge of action in no-action made both these presentations noteworthy.

In October the Nippon Buddhist Research Association held a meeting for three days when lectures on various subjects connected with Buddhism were presented by scholars of different sects.

A complete Sanskrit text of the *Gaṇḍavyūha-sūtra* is now available as Part IV has recently been issued by the Sanskrit Buddhist Texts Publishing Society. The editors are preparing an abstract of contents and an index of proper names and also an introduction.

The Nikka Bukkyō Kyōkai (Sino-Japanese Buddhist Society) was established last year for the purpose of promoting an intimate relation between Buddhists in both countries. The society wishes to arrange for the exchange of scholars and students, for the publication of a magazine in both languages and for the translation of Buddhist literature.

Last summer a number of summer schools were maintained for Buddhist study, in Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka and many other cities and at Mt. communities such as Kōyasan, Hieizan and others. Besides, at many temples, Zen meditation is taught systematically.

The Sixth Annual Session of the Oriental Summer College of which Mr Kaju Nakamura, member of the House of Representatives, is president and sponsor was held in Tokyo and at Karuizawa last July. This summer college was established with the ideal to interpret Oriental culture accurately to the people of other countries. Lectures were given to appreciative audiences on many subjects connected with Japanese religion, history and art. The first lecture

was delivered by the editor of the *Eastern Buddhist* on Zen Buddhism and its influence on Japanese culture.

The International Culture Relation Society (Kokusai Bunka Shinkō Kai) has been recently established for the purpose of bringing to Western countries a thorough understanding of Eastern, especially Japanese culture through lecture courses, publication of books, exchange of scholars, art exhibitions, etc. This past season its lecture courses given in Tokyo have been well attended. One lecture on Zen Buddhism was given by the editor of the *Eastern Buddhist*. This shows that an increasing interest in Japanese Buddhism is being taken by persons of Western countries.

The three main sutras of the Jōdo and Shin sects: *the Muryōju (Sukhāvati-vyūha)*, *the Meditation* and *the Amida* were translated into German by Prof. Z. Usami and are to be published at Berlin.

Our New Contributor, L. de Hoyer, who was formerly vice-president of the Chinese Eastern Railway, has been in the Far East for thirty years. Now retired from business, he is devoting himself to the study of oriental religion and philosophy spending his time in Paris and in Peking.

Owing to unavoidable delays, Miss Teresina Rowell's Essay on "The Background and Early Use of the Buddha-Kṣetra Concept" will be kept over to the next number. Mr Ohashi's article will also be concluded in the next number.

The editor of *The Eastern Buddhist* is leaving Japan on June 4. He will attend the World Congress of Faiths in London during July and give an address. He also hopes to visit Paris and on his return journey the United States and Hawaii.